

What is Claimed is:

1. An apparatus for conditionally processing digital objects addressed to a receiver/decoder in a satellite television system comprising:

a satellite signal receiver for receiving a digital object;

5 a memory for storing the digital object; and,

a control circuit operatively coupled to the receiver and the memory for determining if the digital object is a conditional object, wherein conditional objects are objects which include a rule and an embedded object, the control circuit logically separating the embedded object from the rule if the digital object is a conditional object, the control circuit evaluating the rule to
10 determine how the digital object should be processed.

2. An apparatus as defined in claim 1, wherein the control circuit discards the digital object to conserve memory if the rule evaluates to false, and the control circuit stores the digital object in the memory if the rule
15 evaluates to true.

3. An apparatus as defined in claim 1, wherein the control circuit displays the digital object if the rule evaluates to true, and waits a period of time before re-evaluating the rule if the rule evaluates to false.
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4. An apparatus as defined in claim 3, wherein the period of time is a predetermined period of time.

5. An apparatus as defined in claim 3, wherein the period of time is determined by a variable in a rule being updated.

5 6. An apparatus as defined in claim 1, wherein the digital object is used to construct a television program guide.

7. An apparatus as defined in claim 1, wherein the digital object is used to compose the content a television channel.

10 8. An apparatus as defined in claim 1, wherein the control circuit determines if the digital object is a conditional object by examining header information indicative of a predetermined object type.

15 9. An apparatus as defined in claim 1, wherein the rule comprises a machine executable language.

20 10. An apparatus as defined in claim 1, wherein the digital object comprises a plurality of embedded objects wrapped in a cluster protocol.

11. A method for conditionally storing digital objects comprising the steps of:

retrieving a digital object from memory;

determining if the digital object is a conditional object, wherein conditional objects are objects which include a rule and an embedded object, the rule indicating if the embedded object should be discarded;

logically separating the embedded object from the rule if the digital object is a conditional object;

evaluating the rule to determine if the digital object should be discarded;

discarding the digital object if the rule evaluates to false to conserve memory; and,

storing the digital object if the rule evaluates to true.

12. A method as defined in claim 11, wherein the digital object is used to construct a television program guide.

13. A method as defined in claim 11, wherein the digital object is used to compose the content a television channel.

14. A method as defined in claim 11, wherein the digital object is addressed to an integrated receiver/decoder for use in a satellite television system.

15. A method as defined in claim 11, wherein the determining step comprises examining header information indicative of a predetermined object type.

5 16. A method as defined in claim 11, wherein the rule comprises a machine executable language.

10 17. A method as defined in claim 11, wherein the digital object comprises a plurality of embedded objects wrapped in a cluster protocol.

18. A method for conditionally displaying digital objects comprising the steps of:

retrieving a digital object from memory;

15 determining if the digital object is a conditional object, wherein conditional objects are objects which include a rule and an embedded object, the rule indicating if the embedded object should be displayed;

logically separating the embedded object from the rule if the digital object is a conditional object;

20 evaluating the rule to determine if the digital object should be displayed;

displaying the digital object if the rule evaluates to true; and,

waiting a period of time before re-evaluating the rule if the rule evaluates to false.

19. A method as defined in claim 18, wherein the digital
5 object is used to construct a television program guide.

20. A method as defined in claim 18, wherein the digital
object is used to compose the content a television channel.

10 21. A method as defined in claim 18, wherein the digital
object is addressed to an integrated receiver/decoder for use in a satellite
television system.

15 22. A method as defined in claim 18, wherein the determining
step comprises examining header information indicative of a predetermined
object type.

23. A method as defined in claim 18, wherein the rule
comprises a machine executable language.

20 24. A method as defined in claim 18, wherein the period of
time is a predetermined period of time.

25. A method as defined in claim 18, wherein the period of time is determined by a variable in a rule being updated.

26. A method for conditionally displaying a portion of a digital object comprising the steps of:

retrieving a digital object from memory;

determining if the digital object includes a conditional element, wherein conditional elements are portions of digital objects wrapped in a protocol containing a rule, the rule indicating if the portion of the digital object should be displayed;

logically separating the portion from the rule if the digital object includes a conditional element;

evaluating the rule to determine if the portion should be displayed;

displaying the portion if the rule evaluates to true; and

waiting a period of time before re-evaluating the rule if the rule evaluates to false.

27. A method for conditionally processing a portion of a digital object comprising the steps of:

retrieving a digital object from memory;

determining if the digital object includes a conditional element, wherein conditional elements are portions of digital objects wrapped in a

protocol containing a rule, the rule indicating if the portion of the digital object should be processed;

logically separating the portion from the rule if the digital object includes a conditional element;

5 evaluating the rule to determine if the portion should be processed;

processing the portion if the rule evaluates to true; and

waiting a period of time before re-evaluating the rule if the rule evaluates to false.

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28. A method of broadcasting television content and program guide data, the television content divided into a plurality of television channels, each television channel constructed from at least one content component, the program guide data including multiple channel objects, each
15 channel object associated with one of the television channels, each channel object including at least one channel definition that defines the content components needed to construct the television channel associated with that channel object, wherein the method comprising:

providing the television content and the program guide data;

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adding conditional logic to channel objects that include more than one channel definition, the conditional logic including one or more conditions that must be evaluated by a receiver to identify an appropriate channel definition;

combining the television content and the program guide data
into an output stream; and

broadcasting the output stream to a plurality of receivers.

5 29. The method of claim 28 wherein one of the conditions
contained in the conditional logic of a channel object is based on subscription
data representing channels to which a user subscribes.

10 30. The method of claim 28 wherein one of the conditions
contained in the conditional logic of a channel object is based on selection
history data representing programs that a user has previously watched.

15 31. The method of claim 28 wherein one of the conditions
contained in the conditional logic of a channel object is based on receiver
characteristics data representing a characteristic of the receivers.

20 32. The method of claim 31 wherein the receiver
characteristics data includes geographic location data representing a specific
geographic location, and one of the conditions contained in the conditional
logic of a channel object is based on the geographic location data.

 33. The method of claim 31 wherein the receiver
characteristics data includes at least one identification code that uniquely

identifies a receiver, and one of the conditions contained in the conditional logic of a channel object is based on the identification code.

34. The method of claim 28 wherein one of the conditions
5 contained in the conditional logic of a channel object is based on both the current time at the site of the receivers and subscription data representing channels to which users of the receivers subscribe.

35. The method of claim 28 wherein one of the conditions
10 contained in the conditional logic of a channel object associated with a pay per view television channel is based on the current time at the site of the receivers and pay per view purchase data representing pay per view programs that have been ordered by a user.

36. A method of receiving television content and program
15 guide data that is broadcast from a television broadcasting station, the television content divided into a plurality of television channels, each television channel constructed from at least one content component, the program guide data including multiple channel objects, each channel object
20 associated with one of the television channels, each channel object including at least one channel definition that defines the content components needed to construct the television channel associated with that channel object, each channel object with more than one channel definition including conditional

logic having one or more conditions that must be evaluated to identify an appropriate channel definition, the method comprising:

receiving the television content and the program guide data by a receiver station that includes a receiver;

5 storing the program guide data in a memory;

receiving a tuning request that selects a television channel;

responding to the tuning request by evaluating the conditions in the conditional logic of the channel object associated with the selected television channel and identifying the appropriate channel definition for that television channel; and

10 generating an output of the selected television channel, the output including the content components defined by the identified appropriate channel definition.

15 37. A system for receiving television content and program guide data that is broadcast from a television broadcasting station, the television content divided into a plurality of television channels, each television channel constructed from at least one content component, the program guide data including multiple channel objects, each channel object

20 associated with one of the television channels, each channel object including at least one channel definition that defines the content components needed to construct the television channel associated with that channel object, each channel object with more than one channel definition including conditional

logic having one or more conditions that must be evaluated to identify an appropriate channel definition, the method comprising:

a receiver for receiving the television content;

a memory for storing received program guide data;

5 a controller coupled to the memory, the controller receiving a tuning request that selects a television channel, the controller responding to the tuning request by evaluating the conditions in the conditional logic of the channel object associated with the selected television channel and identifying the appropriate channel definition for that television channel; and

10 display means for generating an output of the selected television channel, the output including the content components defined by the identified appropriate channel definition.